



As one of the main maritime routes in the world, in 2006 the Channel saw around 20% of world traffic, which is approximately 71 ships of over 300 GRT. The extremely tight geographical configuration of this area of high traffic density causes a significant bottleneck where multiple commercial flows become entangled where multiple traffic lanes intersect. Forecasts for the development of world trade lead us to think that this densification of world maritime traffic will continue over the years to come, such as the use of the maritime area by other activities (passenger ferries, wind turbines at sea, extraction of marine aggregate, yachting, fishing, etc.). Consequently, while maritime safety is already an essential objective for the Channel area, it will be even more so in the years to come.

The Channel is not just an area with high traffic density; it is also an area with a significant number of accidents, in which nearly 40% of accidents are caused by collisions between ships. With over 313,000,000 tonnes hazardous products transported in 2006, a maritime accident, in addition to saving the lives of the crews involved, soon has major consequences for the environment and neighbouring populations. Analysis of the main incidents of pollution that have occurred in the Channel proves that these damaging events occur regularly in this area. Around fifty incidences of pollution by hydrocarbon (over 50 T spill) have been surveyed since the 1960s, an average of one per year, including some of the most serious incidences of pollution in the world (Torrey Canyon and Amoco Cadiz in particular). Also whilst the frequency of hydrocarbon pollution is tending to diminish, the 1980s saw the emergence of chemical pollution, and the 1990s of atypical pollution. Consequently, the risk of maritime pollution in the Channel is not diminishing; it is changing nature and complexity, which requires constant adaptation by the French and British authorities to prepare for the management of these events. In terms of maritime safety, the Channel is therefore a high risk area when compared to other European and international shipping areas. This is why studying the characteristics of traffic in the Channel presents an undeniable interest due to the richness and complexity of the aspects to be considered, but especially due to the essential stakes of this analysis, both for the French and British authorities who are directly concerned, and for the European Union as a whole. In fact, a highly significant part of European commercial exchanges pass through the Channel. Consequently, if a major maritime event were to disrupt traffic in the Channel, the entire European Union economy would be affected.

In addition to these stakes, it should be noted that the Channel is a coherent area, and should be studied as such, with its own operation, identity and specific features. It is indeed a place of transit, leading to the concepts of the « Expanded Channel » or the « Channel and its surrounding areas » which have been used in this study. This area has a relationship with others; the Atlantic and the North Sea. The Channel is not just characterised by the density of its commercial traffic, but also by the wide range of uses of the maritime area. While a transit area, the Channel is a recognisable entity in its own right.

As an area of exchange with other areas, the Channel is above all a border for two reasons. First and foremost, it is a border between France and the United Kingdom. In addition, the maritime authorities in these two countries have understood this fact since the 1960s by developing co-operation agreements and strong partnerships in the area of maritime safety. They were aware very early on that they had to manage this shared space, which now gives us one of the most highly-developed and operational co-operations in terms of maritime safety between two States. On land, French and British management of maritime pollution differs. No attempt should be made to bring them closer together. Nevertheless, this study shows that it is very much in the interest of authorities, notably local authorities, to know the ways in which their counterparts on the other side of the Channel operate. This does not mean transposing one system onto another, but exchanging good practice. This is the guiding principle behind European programmes: creating a link between actors and discussing the difficulties encountered and the solutions each party can provide. On this point, this study provides the opportunity for extremely fruitful discussion between French and British partners.

### PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE THE RESPONSE BY FRENCH AUTHORITIES TO MARITIME POLLUTION

1. Make emergency plans more operational
2. Introduce emergency planning in all local councils
3. Update emergency plans regularly with constant adaptation to the risks specific to each territory
4. Introduce an operational watch
5. Develop systematic training programmes for decision-makers and technicians
6. Create a network culture

### PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE THE RESPONSE BY BRITISH AUTHORITIES TO MARITIME POLLUTION

1. Improve the general co-ordination of all actors
2. Use the adaptative approach as an emergency operation management system and rationalise the response by authorities
3. Find lasting solutions to fund emergency and anti-pollution operation training and management, notably within local councils
4. Refine the assessment of risks specific to each county
5. Use simulation systems to reduce training and crisis anticipation costs
6. Improve communication before and during crises

### PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE UNITED KINGDOM IN TERMS OF MARITIME SAFETY

1. Continue to carry out studies specific to the Channel due to the consistency of this space
2. Develop the collection and processing of homogenous, comparable data from each side of the Channel, continuously, on maritime traffic and the vulnerability of coastal spaces
3. Create a common cross-Channel database on maritime traffic and the vulnerability of coastal spaces which can be accessed by decision-makers and researchers
4. Improve risk assessment and refine prevention and preparation measures
5. Continue to exchange good practice between French and British land-based authorities, in particular in terms of training and exercises
6. Consider joint crisis communication between the maritime prefect and the SOSREP in the event of a major maritime accident involving the responsibility of the two countries



# The Management of Maritime Pollution in the English Channel

## A Comparative Analysis of Risks & Contingency Planning

Cyan 06/26/17 10:27 | Person vert, support de la réponse de l'environnement



RESEARCHED BY:

IN CONSULTATION WITH:

COORDINATED BY:

COORDINATED BY: **Conseil général des Côtes d'Armor**  
 Direction des Infrastructures et des Transports & Mission Europe et International  
 BP 2371 | 22023 Saint-Brieuc cedex 1  
 contact@cg22.fr | Tel. +33 (0)2 96 62 63 84

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